

**University of Tikrit**  
**College of Education for Humanities**  
**Department of English**  
**Fourth Year**



## **English Grammar**

### **Sentence Patterns**

**By**

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## 1. Introduction

Language is the primary means of communication, and the sentence is its fundamental unit. Every sentence is organized according to a particular structural arrangement known as a **sentence pattern**. Understanding sentence patterns is essential because they help speakers and writers produce grammatically accurate and meaningful expressions. A sentence pattern refers to the arrangement of sentence elements such as the subject, verb, object, complement, and adverbial. Although English contains an unlimited number of sentences, most of them are built upon a limited number of basic patterns. Mastering sentence patterns improves writing accuracy, reading comprehension, and spoken communication. It also enables learners to analyze complex sentence structures and identify grammatical relationships among sentence components.

## 2. Elements of Sentence Structure

Before discussing sentence patterns, it is necessary to understand the main elements that constitute a sentence.

### 2.1 Subject (S)

The subject is the person, thing, or idea that performs the action or is being described.

#### Examples

- The student passed the examination.
- English grammar is interesting.
- They arrived early.

In the above examples, *the student*, *English grammar*, and *they* function as subjects.

### 2.2 Verb (V)

The verb expresses an action, occurrence, or state.

#### Examples

- The child laughed.
- The teacher explained the lesson.
- She is happy.

The verbs are *laughed*, *explained*, and *is*.

### 2.3 Object (O)

An object receives the action of a transitive verb.

## Examples

- The student wrote an essay.
- The teacher praised the class.

The objects are *an essay* and *the class*.

## Types of Objects

### Direct Object (DO)

Receives the action directly.

- She opened the door.

### Indirect Object (IO)

Indicates the recipient of the direct object.

- She gave the student a book.

Indirect Object = the student

Direct Object = a book

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## 2.4 Complement (C)

A complement provides additional information about the subject or object.

### Subject Complement (SC)

- The weather is pleasant.
- He became a doctor.

### Object Complement (OC)

- They elected him president.
  - We found the task difficult.
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## 2.5 Adverbial (A)

An adverbial provides information about time, place, manner, reason, or frequency.

## Examples

- She lives in Baghdad.
- The meeting begins at nine o'clock.
- He spoke confidently.

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### 3. What are Sentence Patterns?

Sentence patterns are recurring structural arrangements of sentence elements. They represent the grammatical framework upon which sentences are constructed.

For example:

- Birds fly.
- Students study English.
- The soup tastes delicious.

Although these sentences differ in meaning, they follow identifiable structural patterns.

Most grammarians recognize several basic sentence patterns in English. Understanding these patterns helps learners construct grammatically acceptable sentences and analyze language systematically.

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### 4. Basic Sentence Patterns in English

#### Pattern 1: Subject + Verb (S + V)

This pattern contains only a subject and an intransitive verb.

#### Structure

Subject + Intransitive Verb

#### Examples

- Birds fly.
- The baby cried.
- The students arrived.

The verb does not require an object to complete its meaning.

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#### Pattern 2: Subject + Verb + Object (S + V + O)

This pattern contains a transitive verb followed by a direct object.

#### Structure

Subject + Transitive Verb + Object

#### Examples

- Ali bought a laptop.

- The teacher explained the lesson.
- They completed the project.

The object receives the action expressed by the verb.

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### **Pattern 3: Subject + Verb + Complement (S + V + C)**

This pattern contains a linking verb followed by a complement.

#### **Structure**

Subject + Linking Verb + Subject Complement

#### **Examples**

- She is intelligent.
- The sky became dark.
- He remains optimistic.

The complement describes or identifies the subject.

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### **Pattern 4: Subject + Verb + Adverbial (S + V + A)**

Some verbs require an adverbial element to complete their meaning.

#### **Structure**

Subject + Verb + Adverbial

#### **Examples**

- She lives in Baghdad.
- The conference takes place tomorrow.
- The book is on the table.

Without the adverbial, the sentence may sound incomplete.

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### **Pattern 5: Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object (S + V + IO + DO)**

This pattern involves two objects.

#### **Structure**

Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

## Examples

- The teacher gave the students homework.
- She sent her friend a message.
- They offered him assistance.

The indirect object receives the direct object.

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## Pattern 6: Subject + Verb + Object + Complement (S + V + O + C)

This pattern includes an object and an object complement.

### Structure

Subject + Verb + Object + Object Complement

### Examples

- They elected him president.
- We found the test difficult.
- The committee appointed her chairperson.

The complement describes or identifies the object.

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## Pattern 7: Subject + Verb + Object + Adverbial (S + V + O + A)

This pattern includes an object followed by an adverbial.

### Structure

Subject + Verb + Object + Adverbial

### Examples

- She placed the keys on the table.
- They put the books in the library.
- We kept the documents in a safe place.

The adverbial indicates the location or circumstance related to the object.

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## 5. Importance of Sentence Patterns

Sentence patterns are important because they:

1. Improve grammatical accuracy.

2. Enhance writing clarity.
3. Facilitate language learning.
4. Assist in sentence analysis.
5. Develop academic writing skills.
6. Help learners recognize syntactic relationships.

A strong understanding of sentence patterns enables students to construct effective academic essays, reports, and research papers.

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## 7 Summary

Sentence patterns constitute the structural foundation of English grammar. Despite the vast number of possible sentences, most English sentences are based on a limited set of fundamental patterns. These patterns are formed through different combinations of subjects, verbs, objects, complements, and adverbials.

The major sentence patterns include:

1. Subject + Verb (S + V)
2. Subject + Verb + Object (S + V + O)
3. Subject + Verb + Complement (S + V + C)
4. Subject + Verb + Adverbial (S + V + A)
5. Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object (S + V + IO + DO)
6. Subject + Verb + Object + Complement (S + V + O + C)
7. Subject + Verb + Object + Adverbial (S + V + O + A)